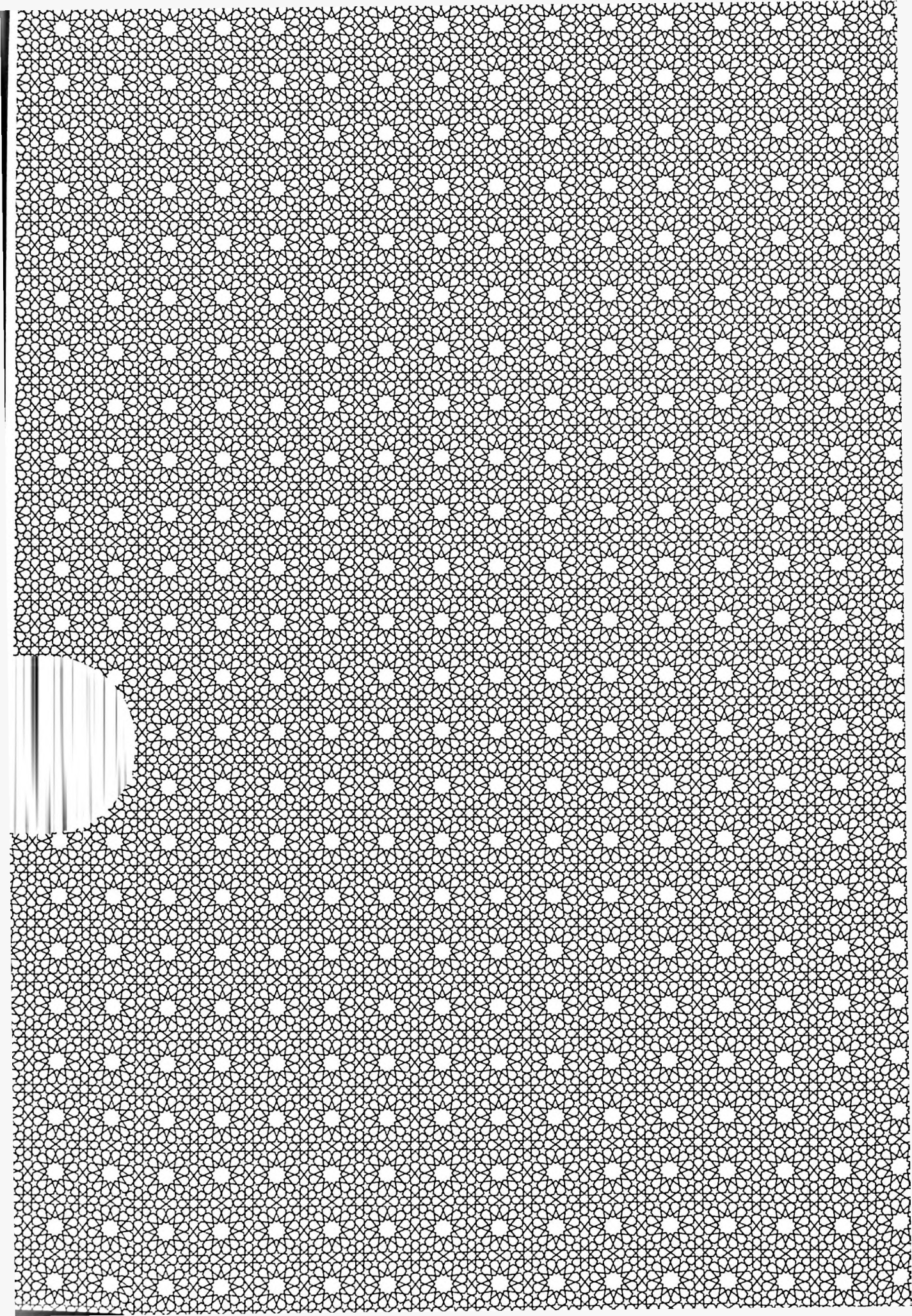




Ayatollah Ja'far Subhani

Resplendence of Wilayah

An Analytical Biography of Imam 'Ali



Resplendence of *Wilāyah*
An Analytical Biography of Imam ‘Alī
(*Furūgh-i Wilāyat*)

Ayatollah Ja‘far Subhani



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The Last Page of the Imam's Life

Martyrdom at the Prayer Niche

The Battle of Nahrawān came to an end and 'Alī (A) returned to Kufa, but a number of the Khawārij who had repented rose once again against the Imam (A) and sowed discord and insurrection. 'Alī communicated a message to them and called them to reconciliation and peace and warned them against insubordination. Nonetheless, having lost his hope in guiding them to the straight path, he exercised his power in order to deal them a severe blow; as a consequence, they suffered fatalities and casualties and some of them were put to flight. 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam, a member of the insurgent group that had escaped the blow, fled to Mecca.

The surviving insurgents made Mecca their headquarters. Three of them by the names of 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam al-Murādī, Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Tamīmī, and 'Amr ibn Bakr al-Tamīmī held a meeting one evening and discussed the circumstances, bloodshed, and civil wars and recalled their memories of the Battle of Nahrawān and their fallen companions. They ultimately came to the conclusion that 'Alī (A), Mu'āwiyah, and 'Amr ibn al-'Āṣ were responsible for the bloodshed and fratricide and taking their lives would urge Muslims to know where they stood and they

¹ In his *Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (p. 213), al-Dīnawarī records Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh's name as Nazzāl ibn 'Āmir and that of 'Amr ibn Bakr as 'Abd Allāh ibn Mālik al-Ṣaydāwī. In *Murūj al-Dhahab* (vol. 2, p. 423), al-Mas'ūdī records the name of Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh as Ḥajjāj ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣarīmī, nicknamed Burak, and records that of 'Amr ibn Bakr as Zādawayh.

would be able to choose a caliph of their own will. They made a covenant and swore on their honour that each of them assumed the responsibility for assassinating one of the three.

Ibn Muljam offered to take 'Alī's (A) life, 'Amr ibn Bakr accepted to kill 'Amr ibn al-Āṣ, and Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh assumed the responsibility to assassinate Mu'āwiyah.¹ They devised their conspiracy in secret in Mecca and they chose the night of 19 Ramaḍān to accomplish their mission. Each of them departed for the city where he was supposed to fulfil his mission. 'Amr ibn Bakr departed for Egypt to kill 'Amr ibn Āṣ, Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh went to Syria to murder Mu'āwiyah, and Ibn Muljam travelled to Kufa to take 'Alī's (A) life.

Burak ibn 'Abd Allāh went to the mosque of Syria and stood to perform the congregational prayer in the first line. When Mu'āwiyah prostrated in prayer he attacked him with his sword but he was too nervous and shy to hit his target and he only managed to strike a blow on Mu'āwiyah's thigh and badly wounded him. Mu'āwiyah was carried to his home where he was placed in his bed.

When the assassin was brought to him, he asked, 'How did you dare to attack me?'

He replied, 'If you spare my life I will bear you some glad tidings.'

He asked, 'What is your glad tidings?'

He replied, "Alī has been assassinated by one of my companions and if you do not believe me, have me confined until you receive the intelligence. If he fails to accomplish his mission I will undertake the fulfilment of the mission and return to you." Mu'āwiyah held him in confinement until he learned of 'Alī's assassination. He released him and it is also reported that he had him executed instantly.²

Physicians examined Mu'āwiyah's wound and said, 'If you do not intend to father children, the wound may be healed by medication; otherwise, the wound needs to be cauterised. Afraid of treatment with cauterisation, Mu'āwiyah consented to not being able to father more children and said that he would be content to have only Yazīd and 'Abd Allāh.'³

¹ *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 29; *Imāmah wa al-Siyāsah*, vol. 1, p. 137.

² Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 6, p. 114.

³ *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 30; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 6, p. 113.

It was on the same night that ‘Amr ibn Bakr stood in the first line of the congregational prayer at a mosque in Egypt. ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, as luck would have it, was running a high fever; as a consequence, he was substituted by Khārijah ibn Ḥanīfah (Ḥudhāfah)’ in leading the congregational prayer. ‘Amr ibn Bakr murdered Khārijah by mistake and when he learned of his mistake, he said, ‘I intended to take ‘Amr’s life, but God willed to have Khārijah killed.’²

‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Muljam al-Murādī arrived at Kufa on 20 Sha‘bān 40 AH / 29 December 660 CE. Informed of his arrival the Imam (A) said, ‘Is he here? I have fulfilled my obligations and now the time is ripe.’ Ibn Muljam stayed at the home of Ash‘ath ibn Qays for a month and prepared for his mission by sharpening his sword.³ There he made the acquaintance of a Khārijī young woman by the name of Qaṭām and fell in love with her. According to al-Mas‘ūdī, she was Ibn Muljam’s cousin and her father and brother had fallen in the Battle of Nahrawān. She was one of the most beautiful young women in Kufa. He ignored the traditions when his eyes were cast on her and asked for her hand in marriage.⁴ Qaṭām said, ‘I accept your proposal on the condition that you provide me with a dowry of my liking.’

‘Abd al-Raḥmān asked her, ‘What is your liking?’

Noticing that he was already smitten, she asked for a substantial dowry, saying, ‘Three thousand dirhams, a slave, a maid, and the assassination of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib.’

Ibn Muljam said, ‘I assumed that you did not love me when you asked me to take ‘Alī’s life!’

Qaṭām said, ‘Try to catch him unawares. Then, if you take his life, we will have taken our revenge and we will lead a good life. If you lose your life in this cause, you will be rewarded by God in the hereafter and those rewards will be everlasting and better than worldly possessions.’

Ibn Muljam said, ‘Behold that I am in Kufa to make an attempt on his life.’⁵

1 Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta’rikh*, vol. 2, p. 212.

2 Ibid., vol. 2, p. 312.

3 Ibid.

4 *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 423.

5 *Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, p. 213; *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 423.

As to Qaṭām's dowry a poet says:

I have seen no dowry like that of Qaṭām,
to be undertaken by a generous man.
Her dowry consisted of three thousand dirhams,
a slave, a maid, and murdering 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib (A) with a sharp sword;
there is no dowry,
more expensive than [the life of] 'Alī (A),
however costly it may be, there is no crime worse
than that perpetrated by Ibn Muljam.'

Qaṭām said to Ibn Muljam that she would have some men of her tribe render him assistance and she arranged likewise. She asked another Khārijī by the name of Wardān ibn Mujālid from the same tribe, Taym al-Rabāb, to accompany him. Intent on taking 'Alī's (A) life, Ibn Muljam met with Shabīb ibn Bajah, a Khārijī from the tribe of Ashja', and said to him, 'Are you seeking honour and dignity in this life and the hereafter?'

He asked, 'What is it you intend to say?'

Ibn Muljam replied, 'Render me assistance in taking 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib's life.'

Shabīb said, 'May your mother mourn for your loss! Are you ignorant of 'Alī's efforts and sacrifices in the lifetime of the Prophet (S)?'

Ibn Muljam replied, 'Woe unto you! Do you not know that he consented to human arbitration as to the divine Word and had our believing brethren killed? We will thus take his life so as to take revenge on him for taking the lives of our brethren.'² Shabīb agreed to Ibn Muljam's request and the latter procured a sword, laced it with fatal poison, and entered the mosque of Kufa at the specified time.

Qaṭām who had retreated at the mosque for spiritual purposes on Friday 13 Ramaḍān was met by Ibn Muljam and Shabīb. She told them that Mujāshi' ibn Wardān ibn 'Alqamah had also volunteered to collaborate with them. Qaṭām covered their heads with silk kerchiefs on that night. The three men held their swords in their hands and stayed the night at

¹ *Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, p. 214; *Kashf al-Ghummaḥ*, vol. 1, p. 582; *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 37. In his *Murūj al-Dhahab* al-Mas'ūdī attributes these lines to Ibn Muljam.

² *Kashf al-Ghummaḥ*, vol. 1, p. 571.

the mosque with others. They sat at one of the gates of the mosque known as the Suddah gate (*bāb al-suddah*).¹

The Night before the Imam's (A) Martyrdom

The Imam (A) would make references to his martyrdom in the month of Ramaḍān of that year. Once on the pulpit in mid-Ramaḍān, he touched his beard, saying, 'The most miserable of people will dye my beard with the blood [gushing from] my head.' He is also reported as saying, 'The month of Ramaḍān is here and it is the best month. It is in this month that developments will occur to the government. Behold that you will go on pilgrimage to Mecca this year in one line (without a leader) as I will not be with you any longer.'²

The Imam's (A) companions would say that he was making a reference to his death, but they were not able to understand it.³ The Imam (A) stayed at the home of one of his children in his last days. He broke his fast in the evening at the home of his son, Ḥasan (A), another night at Ḥusayn's (A), and another at the home of his son-in-law, 'Abd Allāh ibn Ja'far, Lady Zaynab's (A) husband. The Imam (A) would not eat more than three morsels. One of his friends inquired about the reason for eating such insufficient amount of food. He replied, 'The divine command is coming and I want my stomach to be empty. There is only a night or two left.' It was on that night that he received the blow.

He was the guest of his daughter, Umm Kulthūm, on the night of his martyrdom. He broke his fast by eating three morsels of food and then spent the rest of the night on prayer. He was distressed from the early part of the night until daybreak. At times, he gazed at the sky and the movements of the stars. His anxiety grew as the daybreak approached. He kept saying, 'By God! Neither I say untruth nor does the one who has disclosed it to me. This is the night on which I have been promised to fall a martyr.'⁴

1 *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 424; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh*, vol. 6, p. 83; Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd's commentary on *Nahj al-Balāghah*, vol. 6, p. 115; Ibn Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 195; *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 32; *Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, vol. 7, p. 325; *Istī'āb*, vol. 2, p. 282; *Rawḍat al-Wā'izīn*, vol. 1, p. 161.

2 Al-Mufīd, *Irshād*, Islāmiyyah, p. 151; *Rawḍat al-Wā'izīn*, vol. 1, p. 163.

3 Al-Mufīd, *Irshād*, Islāmiyyah, p. 151; *Rawḍat al-Wā'izīn*, vol. 1, p. 163.

4 *Rawḍat al-Wā'izīn*, vol. 1, p. 164.

The Prophet (S) had informed him of his martyrdom. 'Alī (A) is reported as saying that the Prophet (S) once closed his speech tearfully by recounting the merits of the month of Ramaḍān. I asked him why he was in tears and he replied, 'It is because of what will be in store for you in this month. It is as if I see that you are performing prayer and the most miserable of the people in the world, similar to the slayer of the she-camel of Thamūd, rises up to strike a blow on your head and to dye your beard with your blood.'

That horrifying night ultimately came to an end and 'Alī (A) departed at dawn for the mosque to perform his dawn prayer. The ducks in his yard followed him and pulled his garment. When some members of his household tried to shoo them away, he said, 'Let them be! They are crying and they will be followed by mourners.'²

Imam Ḥasan (A) asked, 'Why do you take it as an inauspicious sign?' He replied, 'My son! I do not take it as such, but I feel that I will be slain.' Distressed by her father's words, Umm Kulthūm said, 'Please send Ja'dah to lead the congregational prayer at the mosque.' The Imam (A) said, 'It is impossible to flee from divine ordainment.' He then fastened his belt tightly and left for the mosque as he was whispering these lines:

Fasten your belt tightly for death,
since you will be met by him.
Do not be restless to meet death,
when you will be met by him.³

The Imam (A) entered the mosque, stood to perform prayer, pronounced the *takbīr* [i.e. *Allāhu akbar*; God is Greatest], recited a *sūrah*, and prostrated in prayer. Ibn Muljam rushed towards him, saying in a loud voice, 'Judgement belongs to God not to you, 'Alī!' and struck 'Alī's (A) head with his sword which had been laced with poison. The blow was accidentally received on the spot which had been formerly struck by 'Amr ibn 'Abd al-Wudd;⁴ as a consequence, his head was split. In his

1 'Uyūn al-Riḍā, Qum, vol. 1, p. 297.

2 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 2, p. 212; *Irshād*, p. 652; *Rawdat al-Wā'izīn*, vol. 1, p. 165; *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 425.

3 *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 429; *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 31.

4 *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 1, p. 584.

Amālī, Shaykh al-Ṭūsī narrates a hadith from Imam al-Riḍā (A) who in turn narrates it from his father on the authority of Imam al-Sajjād (A): ‘Ibn Muljam struck a blow on ‘Alī’s (A) head as he was in prostration.’

In his *Tafsīr*, Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, the Shi‘i Qur’an exegete of renown, reports that in his first *rak‘ah* of prayer before he received a blow on his head by Ibn Muljam, he had recited eleven verses from Sūrah al-Anbiyā, the twenty-first *sūrah* of the Qur’an.² Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, the famous Sunni scholar, reports: ‘When the Imam stood in the prayer niche he was attacked by a number of individuals and Ibn Muljam struck a blow on him,³ and they immediately fled away. Blood gushed out of his head in the prayer niche and his beard was dyed with his blood. He said, “By the Lord of Ka‘bah, I found deliverance.” He then read this verse: “*From it did We create you, into it shall We return you, and from it shall We bring you forth another time*” (20:55).’

Having received the blow, ‘Alī (A) said in a loud voice, ‘Seize him!’ People rushed towards Ibn Muljam, but he wielded his sword at anybody who dared to approach him. Qutham ibn ‘Abbās rushed forward and seized him by his arms and flung him to the ground. He was brought to ‘Alī (A) who asked the assailant, ‘Are you Ibn Muljam?’

He said, ‘Yes.’

The Imam said to Ḥasan (A), ‘Take care of your enemy. Feed him and tie him up. If I die, have him join me so as I converse with him before my Lord, but if I survive, I will either forgive or punish him.’⁴

Along with Banū Hāshim, Ḥasan (A) and Ḥusayn (A) placed the Imam (A) on a carpet and carried him home. Ibn Muljam was brought again to the Imam (A) who looked at him and said, ‘If I die, take his life as he made an attempt on my life, but if I survive, I will look into the matter.’

Ibn Muljam said, ‘I have bought this sword for a thousand dirhams and spent a thousand dirhams on lacing it with poison. If my trust is breached, may God Almighty take his life.’⁵

1 *Biḥār al-Anwār*, old edition, vol. 9, p. 650, quoting *Amālī*.

2 Abū al-Futūḥ al-Rāzī, *Tafsīr*, vol. 4, p. 425.

3 *Tadhkirat al-Khawāṣṣ*, Najaj, p. 177.

4 Al-Ya‘qūbī, *Ta‘rīkh*, vol. 2, p. 212.

5 *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 1, p. 586; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta‘rīkh*, vol. 6, p. 185.

Umm Kulthūm said to Ibn Muljam, 'Enemy of God! Did you take the life of the Commander of the Faithful?'

The accursed man replied, 'I did not take the life of the Commander of the Faithful, but I have taken the life of your father.'

Umm Kulthūm said, 'I wish that the Imam recovers from the blow.'

Ibn Muljam said impudently, 'I see that you will mourn for him. By God! I have struck such blow on him that had the world received such blow it would have perished.'

Some milk was brought for the Imam (A) from which he sipped and said, 'Give some of this milk to the prisoner and do not hurt him.'

The physicians of Kufa visited him. The most experienced of them was Athīr ibn 'Amr who treated wounds. He examined the wound and asked for the fresh lung of a lamb. He took out a vein from it and placed it on the wound. He then took it out, saying, 'Alī, prepare your testament as the blow has affected the brain and there is no treatment for the wound.' The Imam (A) asked for pen and paper and dictated his testament to Ḥasan and Ḥusayn which was actually addressed to humanity. It is narrated along with its transmission chains by a number of traditionists and historians flourishing earlier and later than Sayyid al-Raḍī.² It is to be noted that the testament is more elaborate than what is narrated by Sayyid al-Raḍī in *Nahj al-Balāghah*. Selections of the testament will follow below.

I enjoin you to fear God and avoid worldly pursuits, even though the world turns towards you. Do not regret your worldly losses. Say the truth. Strive for gaining divine rewards. Be an enemy to wrong doers and help the wronged.

I enjoin you, all my children, members of my household, and those addressed in my testament to fear God, improve your affairs, and make peace between opposing parties (*dhāt al-bayn*); as I heard from

1 *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 36; *Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, p. 214; Ibn Sa'd, *Ṭabaqāt*, vol. 2, p. 24; Ibn Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 169; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 6, p. 85; *Iqd al-Farīd*, vol. 4, p. 359; *Kashf al-Ghummah*, vol. 1, p. 586.

2 Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, *Mu'ammarrūn wa al-Waṣāyā*, p. 149; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 6, p. 85; *Tuḥaf al-'Uqūl*, p. 197; *Man Lā Yaḥḍuruhu al-Faqīh*, vol. 4, p. 141; *Kāfī*, vol. 7, p. 51; partly reported in *Murij al-Dhahab* (vol. 2, p. 425); *Maqātil al-Ṭālibiyyīn*, p. 38.

your grandfather (S) saying, 'Making peace between people is more meritorious than performing prayer and fasting for one year.'

By God! By God! Take care of orphans, lest they starve, lest they perish because of neglecting their well-being. By God! By God! Be friendly to your neighbours, as your prophet enjoined you to treat them as such. He always enjoined others to treat them so well that we thought he would allot them some share in inheritance.

By God! By God! Be attentive to acting upon the precepts of the Qur'an, lest you may be surpassed by others in so doing. By God! By God! Be attentive to performing prayer that is the pillar of your faith. By God! By God! Be attentive to the House of your God. Do not abandon it so long as you live, lest you will not be granted a respite and you will be afflicted by divine punishment.

By God! By God! Be attentive to struggling in the cause of God by your possessions, lives, and words. It is incumbent on you to strengthen the ties of friendship and affection. Do not neglect from generosity. Do not turn your back to each other. Do not sever the ties of kinship and friendship. Do not be inattentive to enjoining good and forbidding wrong lest you will be overcome by vicious people and your supplications will not be divinely answered.

O descendants of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib! Beware to not take your hands out of your sleeves to dip them in the blood of Muslims, saying that the Commander of the Faithful was murdered: take advantage of it to shed blood!"

Beware that you should only execute out of punishment the one who made an attempt on my life. Behold! If I die from this blow, retaliate by striking only one blow on him. Do not mutilate him, as I heard the Messenger of God saying, 'Do not mutilate even a rabid dog.'

The Imam's (A) children were silent, listening to their father's invigorating words, as they were overcome with such unbearable grief. The Imam (A) lost consciousness at the close of his testament and when he regained consciousness said, 'Ḥasan, I have a word for you. This is my last night. When I am dead, wash and shroud my dead body with your own

1 *Nahj al-Balāghah*, Letter 47.

hands and supervise my burial service. Perform prayer for my body and bury it in secret somewhere far from Kufa.'

The Imam (A) lived for two more days and passed away on 21 Ramaḍān 40 / 29 January 661 at the age of 63. His son, Imam Ḥasan (A), washed his dead body and performed prayer over him by saying *Allāhu akbar* (God is Greatest) seven times and also saying, 'Behold that saying this formula seven times will not be repeated for any other dead body.' His remains were buried in Ghārī (present-day Najaf) in the vicinity of Kufa. He served as caliph for four years and ten months.'

Mourning for 'Alī (A)

After the martyrdom of the Imam (A), Ḥasan ibn 'Alī (A) delivered a speech in which he praised and glorified God, invoked God to grant the Prophet His blessings, and further said, 'A man passed away tonight who was neither known by former generations nor will the like of him be known to the coming generations. When he fought, he was accompanied by Gabriel on the right hand side and by Michael on his left. By God! The night on which he passed away coincides with the demise of the Prophet Moses (A), the ascension of the Prophet Jesus (A), and the revelation of the Qur'an. Know that he did not leave behind any gold or silver but seven hundred dirhams which were his savings from his stipend by which he intended to hire a servant for his family.'²

Qa'qā' ibn Zurārah rose up and said, 'May God Almighty be satisfied with you. O Commander of the Faithful! By God! Your life was a key to all good things. Had people been obedient to you, divine blessings would have showered on them; but they showed ingratitude for blessings and chose this world at the expense of losing the hereafter.'³

Abū al-Aswad al-Du'alī versified the following elegy for 'Alī (A):

Say to Mu'āwiyah ibn Ḥarb that the eyes of scolding ones better be blind.

Did you make us mourn in the month of Ramaḍān for
[the loss of] the best of people?

1 *Manāqib Āl Abī Ṭālib*, vol. 3, p. 313; *Tadhkirat al-Khawās*, p. 112; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 2, p. 213.

2 Al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 2, p. 213.

3 Ibid.

You took the life of the best of people who rode beasts and tamed them,
 the best of people who wore sandals,
 the best of people who recited the oft-repeated verses (*āyāt al-mathānī*)¹
 and the Manifest Book.

If you see the countenance of Ḥusayn's father,
 you will see that his splendour is visible above those who see him.

O 'Alī! The Quraysh, wherever they are,
 are aware of your excellence in lineage and faith!²

Another elegy versified for 'Alī (A) is by Ṣa'ṣa'ah ibn Ṣawḥān who was synonymous with eloquence and was endowed with a splendid gift of repartee. In his elegy versified for the Commander of the Faithful, he says:

May my parents be your ransom! O Commander of the Faithful!

May you rejoice at being granted divine blessings!

Indeed, you were pure of lineage, forbearing, and a true hero.

You fulfilled your wishes and gained abundantly.

In your transactions with God, you hastened towards your Lord.

You were kindly admitted by Him by His bearing you glad tidings.

You were encircled by angels and you dwelled next to
 the Chosen One [Prophet Muḥammad].

God made you dwell beside him and granted you an exalted rank similar to his;

And you were allowed to partake of His cup.

We invoke our Lord, who granted us the blessing,
 of following you and your deeds and befriend your friends;

and be the enemies of your enemies, to raise us from
 the dead and make us accompany you;

as you excel others in attaining to such exalted rank;

and you attained such unsurpassed high station.

1 The seven verses of the first *sūrah*.

2 *Murūj al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 428; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rikh*, vol. 4, p. 116; Ibn Athīr, *Kāmil*, vol. 3, p. 394; *Aghānī*, vol. 11, p. 122. In his *Maqātil al-Ṭālibīyyīn*, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī [al-Iṣbahānī] attributes these verses that constitute a part of an elegy in twenty-one couplets to Umm al-Haytham bint al-Aswad.

You struggled most excellently on the side of the Prophet;
in the cause of God, aiming at consolidating the religion of God;
and the prophetic tradition; you vanquished the insurgency,
and established Islam on solid foundations.
You established order in religion and surpassed in attaining noble qualities.

You were the first to answer the Prophet's call;
and to accord precedence above all to obeying him.
You were the first to render him assistance and make sacrifices in the
cause of God. You unsheathed your sword to render him aid.

All obstinate wrongdoers were defeated by you.

All disbelievers were humiliated by you.

Disbelief, polytheism, and wrongdoing were uprooted by you;
you caused the death of those who deviated from the straight path, those
who rose against the truth.

O Commander of the Faithful! May you rejoice at the noble qualities
divinely bestowed upon you.

You were the closest companions of the Prophet,
you preceded others in embracing the Islamic faith,
you excelled others in knowledge, understanding, firm belief,
courage, valour, and the sacrifices made in the cause of Islam.

We pray to God to be granted the like of your rewards,
as you were the key to all good things and
you had closed to us the door to all unpleasant things.

It was by your martyrdom that the doors to unpleasant things were
opened to us and those to good things were closed on us.

Had people listened to your words, they would have been showered,
by good things; but alas! They preferred this world over the hereafter!

The Khawārij and other enemies of Islam rejoiced at that horrifying
crime and praised Ibn Muljam for his delinquency. A Khārijī by the name
of 'Imrān ibn Ḥittān al-Waqāshī versified these lines about Ibn Qutham:

What a blow it was from a righteous man, aiming

but at attaining the satisfaction of the Lord of the Throne.
 When I remember him, I believe that in the presence of God
 his scale is heavier than that of others.

Qāḍī Abū Ṭayyib Ṭāhir ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Shāfi‘ī wrote these verses:

What a blow it was from a criminal who
 aimed but at destroying the pillars of religion.
 When I remember him, I pile up curses on ‘Imrān and Ḥittān.
 May divine curses be always on him, overtly and covertly.
 You are the dogs of hell as attested in the rules of religion.¹

The resplendence of the life of such an exalted and illustrious man, who had been born in the Ka‘bah and was martyred in the mosque, faded away; a man whom only he alone stood next to the Prophet (S) in excellence. He was unsurpassed in his struggles and sacrifices in the cause of God, in his unrivalled knowledge of the secrets of existence, and in his other noble qualities. His character was an array of noble and seemingly contrary qualities which may not be found, in their entirety, in any other person.

You are endowed with various qualities,
 as a result, you are unsurpassed by others.
 You are righteous, versed in politics, forbearing, and courageous,
 you are an annihilator, an ascetic, a poor man, and a generous one.

¹ *Murij al-Dhahab*, vol. 2, p. 427. Other responses in verse to the two couplets by ‘Imrān ibn Ḥittān are also included by al-Mas‘ūdī.

The present author most ashamedly comes to the end of his book, well aware that he has failed to even present an imperfect depiction of the holy and unrivalled character and noble qualities of Imam 'Alī (A). Nevertheless, he is content to have acted upon his obligation and by holding a worthless bundle of cotton yarn has joined the line of bidders desiring to purchase [the one who is like Zahrā's] Joseph.
May he intercede with the Lord on the
behalf of this humble
servant of
God.

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